



November 29, 2011

The Honorable Mike Nofs
Chairman, Senate Energy & Technology Committee
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48906

Dear Chairman Nofs and Committee Members:

Bloomingtondale Communications is a small communications business in Southwest Michigan. We provide telephone, broadband and cable TV services to our customers.

This past year Bloomingtondale was the recipient of two ARRA Stimulus grants. We elected not to build on a bike trail route due to cost in a stretch near South Haven. I've been told that they are offering companies like mine "Bargain basement pricing" to help deploy broadband, but that was not my company's experience. For our project, the trail would have been the most efficient route design but we ended up building a longer network path to avoid the excessive fees being required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

I've heard that "my guys are always working on the pedestals" and that our trucks are a bother or an eyesore if they are in a park or trail for some reason. That's like saying emergency vehicles should slow down and be quite the so they don't disturb the park's peaceful ambiance. Our trucks are on site anywhere for one reason: to serve our customers if there is trouble. And at times it may be critical that the service is repaired immediately—for example, if 911 services are impacted. Most of the work goes on for us at the customer's premises, not at the pedestal. If we had used the Bike Trail route in our project, no pedestals would have even been on the trail – all the facility is buried. The pedestals are by the houses not along the route where the feeder fiber is running. I would think that would be the case most of the time along routes that use bike trails as part of the design.

For my company it's too late. Hopefully with the help of SB 499, other companies will be able to use the bike trails to deploy more Broadband in rural Michigan.

Sincerely,

Mark Bahnson
CEO/General Manager